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[Entered at the Boston Post Office as Second Class Mail Matter.]

VOL. LVII.

BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1895.

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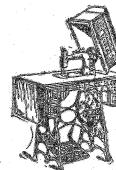
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VOL. LVII.

BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1895.

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PUBLISHERS,
NO. 3 SOMERSET STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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LANIER'S ASPIRATIONS AFTER PEACE.

BY KATE GANNETT WELLS.

Never have there been more exquisite pleadings for peace than in the prose and poetical writings of Sidney Lanier, the Southern poet, who wrote his greatest poem, "Sunrise," when his temperature was 104 degrees. That fever heat compelled his hand to grasp the pencil while his brain teemed with hurrying words and his heart beat short and quick with the pain of coming death.

As one of the deeply religious poets of America and as an eloquent lover of nature his thoughts and words are always akin to the spirit of peace especially in the lines with which he deprecated war, though when the crisis came between North and South he enlisted in the Confederate army. Even in his childhood he had liked to play soldier, but the experiences of that struggle proved to him that war was not play but a series of embodied horrors. In his only novel, "Tiger Lilies," he likens war to "a strange, enormous, terrible flower" which two wealthy landed proprietors (of North America) made

into a grand specimen. Its seeds are still supposed to remain in the land, says Lanier, yet for his part he wished that the seed might utterly perish "out of sight, life and memory and out of the remote hope of resurrection forever and ever, no matter in whose granary they are cherished." Surely if Lanier were now living he would deprecate military instruction in our schools and perhaps would regret the national observance of Decoration Day, preferring in silence to honor the dead rather than under the guise of patriotism to stimulate afresh the war spirit.

It is however in Lanier's "Psalm of The West" that he sings most pathetically of peace. The whole poem is wonderful in its apostrophe to Freedom when

"Friendship, in freedom, will blot out the bounding of race,
And straight Law, in freedom, will curve to the rounding of grace,
And Fashion, in freedom, will die of the lie in her face."

* * * * *

"When Faith from the wedding of Knowing and Loving shall purely be born."

He tells of the horseman and of Columbus :

"Pursue the West but long enough, 'tis East;"

a line which is as full of significance for every searcher for truth as for Columbus. Then he pictures the Pilgrim and the

"Mayflower, Ship of Faith's best Hope!

* * * * *

Mayflower, piteous Heartsease Petal!
God, thy God will pilot thee!"

He traces the Revolution when

"Freedom out of a Wound shall rise,"

yet he grieves, for if men knew but

"The half as much as bluebirds do,
Now in this tender little calm
Each hand would out, and every palm
With patriot palm strike brotherhood's stroke
Or ere these lines of battle broke."

Still singing of the nation's growth he describes the Civil War, when

"Heartstrong South would have his way,"

and

"Headstrong North hath said him nay."

Calling to North and South under the figure of speech of Heart and Brain he bids them "Beware." But the conflict came: